

CHAPTER 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Oversupply of certain housing types combined with a sluggish economy has led to a soft housing market. The strongest demand remains for single family units, while during the decade of the 1980's, the largest supply came in the area of condominiums. The current economic conditions has slowed housing production, while many condominium units remain unsold or are being rented out as apartment units.

Affordable housing is a serious issue for two major segments of Warwick's population: elderly and single parent households. Demographic analysis indicates that these are the largest growing household groups in Warwick at this time.

Overbuilding of multi-family and condominium units has raised objections among many neighborhood associations that perceive the growth of such densely settled areas a threat to the present character of Warwick. Therefore, future production of multi-family units to solve problems of affordability is not likely.

Federal participation in housing programs is greatly diminished from what it was in the 1970's and early 1980's. Warwick will have to rely more on its own resources in order to meet the challenge of affordability in the future.

In addition to large tracts of land in the Cowesett and Bald Hill areas that may still be available for single family subdivision growth, there are about 7,000 undersized residentially zoned vacant lots scattered throughout the City. While not all of them can be developed, there is the possibility that a substantial number, perhaps in excess of 3,000, could be developed over the next decade.

Housing planning and implementation is currently divided among several agencies. The Planning Department is charged with housing planning while the Warwick Housing Authority is responsible for public housing programs for the elderly and families. State agencies such as Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (RIHMFC) provides assistance for first time homebuyer. The lack of coordination within city and state agencies hampers the City's efforts to deal with housing issues. Most housing production occurs in the market place where market prices and rents continue to escalate beyond the means of some people's

ability to pay. Indeed housing costs have increased at a far greater pace than the median income of Warwick households.

Summary Recommendations:

1. Promote affordable housing strategies that would include alternative housing types such as congregate housing and accessory apartments.¹
2. Provide assistance to the elderly so they can remain in their own homes.
 - a. Seek low/no interest revolving loan program for home repairs.
 - b. Reverse mortgages and life estates.
3. Encourage private organizations to develop affordable housing for single parent families and the elderly.
4. Provide a detailed inventory of the substandard lots and tax title lots throughout the City and develop policy regarding their future use. Some lots can potentially be developed, while others may never be developed and should be disposed of by expanding existing side yards or back yards within the neighborhoods. Yet others may be appropriately acquired for conservation or recreational purposes.
5. Coordinate housing, planning, and implementation under the auspices of housing advocate within the Planning Department.
6. Existing neighborhoods need to be protected. The City should be more careful in protecting neighborhood boundaries from intense commercial development through the Zoning Ordinance and its enforcement. The City's new Zoning Ordinance provides the tools and the Zoning Board of Review has been far more responsive to neighborhood concerns at the present time than in the past. This concern should be institutionalized by encouraging neighborhood associations to review and comment on all major developments and particularly those that require a change in zoning or those that may have an adverse affect on the residential viability of the neighborhoods.

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION

This Housing Plan is a component of the City of Warwick's Comprehensive Community Plan, as mandated by the State of Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act of 1988. As a contribution to the process, the University of Rhode Island Graduate Curriculum in Community Planning and Area Development (URI CPAD) undertook a study of current housing issues in the City of Warwick: A Study of Housing for Warwick, RI (1990). The project required students to develop a community profile, identify key housing issues and assess the level of impact these issues have on the affordability, availability and accessibility of housing in the City of Warwick. The study has been integrated into this Housing Plan along with recommendations for housing policies and programs.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

In 1986, Warwick City officials conducted an attitude survey as part of the Land Use Plan (1987). The results showed that citizens shared a strong concern about the loss of neighborhood identity due to rapid urbanization and commercialization. It was felt that:

1. the effects of past land use policies had fostered commercial development,
2. the result of commercial and industrial growth along the City's transportation network strengthened Warwick's role in the regional economy,
3. increases in real estate prices (experienced throughout the region during the 1980's) had a negative effect on local residents' ability to

afford housing in the City, and,

4. the City's existing housing stock may no longer meet the needs of the changing demographic profile of its population.

This Plan will assess the anticipated demand for housing, as well as the existing number and type of dwelling units. It will attempt to correlate other functional areas (e.g. socioeconomic conditions and transportation) to either housing demand or supply. Particular issues that affect the quality of life in subsections of the City and hinder a desirable sense of community are also addressed, as well as past and present policies and programs. This Plan concludes with an analysis of the issues identified and recommendations to address them.

PROFILE OF WARWICK

Historic Overview provides a brief history of Warwick and a profile of some of the key features of the City. It also describes planning districts used to study housing related issues on a more localized level. There are fifteen (15) planning districts used for this Housing Plan. The other elements of the Comprehensive Plan broke the City down into eight (8) planning districts. The primary reason for the variance is that housing issues required a finer delineation of districts that are neighborhood-based. While the other elements are also concerned with neighborhood issues, those elements were able to consolidate neighborhoods within the eight planning districts.

Housing Demand consists of an analysis of past, present and predicted future demand for housing in the City of Warwick. Four components of demand are examined in the URI CPAD study, including the size, age, number, and type of housing units that are needed. The size and age of the population directly impact the number and type of housing units needed. Family size affects both the type of housing sought and the school population. The issue of housing affordability is of special concern with the poor-elderly, single female heads of household, the disabled and

handicapped, and all those of lower income whose needs are not easily met through the competitive forces of the market economy.

The economic profile of a community has a great impact on housing demand. Available employment can give an indication of the composition of the population, and local wage structure can indicate resources of residents, which determines housing choices. Warwick's position in the regional economy, anticipated future economic trends, and available infrastructure (e.g. transportation network) also plays a role in the demand for housing. Regional trends are particularly significant, because only a small proportion of Warwick's population works in the City.

Housing Supply contains current inventory information of housing stock in terms of type of structure, price, and location of owner occupied and rental housing is a critical base on which to build projections of future construction needs. Primary forces that influence the production of housing include such market-related factors as the prime interest rate, regional housing demand, and Warwick's comparative position in this market. The chapter evaluates needs of the projected population and encompasses such constraining

factors as the availability of land, sewer and water, the need for open space. The anticipated impact of new construction on such City services as police and fire protection and schools are addressed. Of particular significance are the environmental constraints as indicated in the Buildout Analysis Supplement to the Land Use Plan.

Issues and Recommendations summarizes the critical issues identified from the Study's analysis,

both quantitative and qualitative, and provides a series of recommendations for comprehensive policies to address. Additionally, in the past, the City of Warwick and organizations within the City have implemented a number of programs to address local housing needs. Appendix A will focus on program changes over time, and how these changes have affected the current range of services being provided.

CHAPTER 3

COMMUNITY PROFILE

HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Warwick has grown from several spatially isolated villages, at the time of founding in the 1600's, to a mature suburban city in the 1990's. Historically, population growth and development have occurred around a series of distinct villages/neighborhoods. During the course of history, Warwick's village character has undergone a number of changes.

Early settlement in Warwick developed around a number of agricultural and maritime villages in Shawomet, Pawtuxet, and Apponaug. These villages were separated geographically by farmland and natural boundaries, including coves along Narragansett and Greenwich Bays. The abundance of potential development sites with favorable natural settings influenced the decentralized village settlement patterns of Warwick.

During the Industrial Revolution, a number of textile mills and mill villages developed along the banks of the Pawtuxet River. The first mill was developed in 1794 in Centerville and was followed by mill villages in Arctic, Natick, and

Pontiac. The growth of these mill villages and the development of Arctic (now in West Warwick) fostered the City's 19th century urban and industrial character. However, with the secession of West Warwick from the City in 1913, the urban and industrial centers of the west became part of West Warwick, while the eastern shores of Warwick retained their rural character until the mid-20th century.²

The proximity of coves and beaches to the State's central population base in the City of Providence led to the growth of a number of resort villages in Warwick. The first of these developments occurred on Warwick Neck with the construction of Rocky Point in the mid-1800's. Other resort centers, including Conimicut, Oakland Beach, and Buttonwoods, served as distinct centers for development and population growth.

At the turn of the 20th century, development in Warwick was spurred by improvements in the City's transportation system. The extension of the electric trolley through Warwick and the electrification of the Warwick Railroad influenced the growth of a number of suburban

neighborhoods in the northern portion of the City.

Access to Providence via the electric trolley contributed significantly to neighborhood growth in Pawtuxet and Lakewood. Extension of additional trolley and rail lines improved accessibility and contributed to concentrated residential growth in the resort areas. This increase in population was paralleled by an increase in commercial, industrial and institutional development that continued until the Depression in the 1930's.³ The development of Theodore Francis Green State Airport in Warwick in the 1930's (and its continued expansion throughout the rest of the century) effectively divided development within the City in half.

Despite a significant increase in population and commercial growth during the early part of the century (in 1940 Warwick was still a community of suburban neighborhoods), mill villages and resort communities separated by large tracks of farmland and natural features. A 1941 Providence Evening Bulletin article described the diverse character of Warwick as follows:

"Officially, Warwick is a city (but), it has not quite made up its mind whether to become a full fledged city or to remain the half country town and half city it is today. Except for the parts immediately bordering Cranston, Warwick usually presents a picture of a fully developed settlement on one side of a street and a dairy farm

or market garden on the other. The dream of many a city worker are interrupted in the early morning by the crowing of roosters and the lowing of cows".

A second and more substantial wave of growth occurred during post-World War II suburban migration. Spurred by post war prosperity, federal housing programs (including those of the Federal Housing Administration and the Veterans Administration), an increase in the use of automobile transportation, and the availability of inexpensive land for development, Warwick experienced unprecedented growth in population and the development of single family detached housing. Many suburban developments consisted of 50 to 200 single family structures built on large tracks of farmland (Gaspee Plateau and a number of other large subdivisions were built during this period.) This suburbanization trend continued through mid 1960 and resulted in a dramatic escalation in population: from 28,785 in 1940 to 83,694 by 1970.⁴

Since the mid-60's, there has been a shift from development of single family homes to commercial and multi-family housing development. Growth in commercial development can be directly linked to improvements in the City's transportation network. The completion of Interstate 95 in

1966, and the opening of Interstate 295 two years later, provided easy access to and from Providence and other population centers and markets in the region. Ensuing shopping mall construction has served as a magnet for strip retail and commercial development in proximity to the City's major thoroughfares. With this increase in commercial development and the development of a large number of apartment complexes on or near major roadways, the character of the City has been changed from a bedroom community of suburban neighborhoods to that of a mature suburban city which is facing more urban problems of overcrowding and congestion.⁵

DISTRICT OVERVIEW

While historically Warwick was a city of villages and neighborhoods, the urbanization of the past fifty years has had a significant impact on the spatial identity of neighborhoods and on the overall character of the City. Subdivisions have replaced farmland and eroded boundary lines between villages. New neighborhoods with new boundaries (such as Governor Francis Farms and Pilgrim Park) established themselves within the city. Commercial development and expansion of major arteries acted as wedges, physically dividing many of the original villages and further eroding neighborhood identity. While many of

the core areas of Warwick's villages can still be identified today, the boundary lines of these villages and neighborhoods are difficult to delineate; small areas of the City that had strong historic identity have been absorbed into larger residential units. As a result of this transition, clearly delineated neighborhood boundaries have become difficult to define. Complicating this problem is a lack of consistent information on neighborhoods within the City. After careful survey, it was possible for the URI CPAD students to identify a larger geographic unit of measurement that may contain several neighborhoods all sharing similar concerns about the area of the City in which they lie. As a result, the URI CPAD study utilized fifteen (15) districts for the spatial analysis of the housing study. These districts were delineated based on several factors:

- 1) Incorporation of historical neighborhood areas,
- 2) Conformance to natural features (e.g. streams, wetlands, water bodies),
- 3) Adherence to manmade boundaries including major arterials, commercial sectors and industrial development, and
- 4) Conformance to existing Plat and Zoning District boundaries.

District One lies in the northern part of the City and includes the neighborhoods of Norwood, Lakewood, Pilgrim Park, and Massasoit Terrace. It is bounded to the west by the Amtrak railroad corridor, to the north by the Pawtuxet River and to the east by Warwick Avenue and River Street.

The District's southern border follows a path bounded by Plats 297, 309 and 308. The most prominent feature of District 1 is Post Road, which bisects it from north to south. Pilgrim High School, one of three public high schools in the City, is also located within the district. Traffic generated by both of these features impacts the neighborhoods of District One significantly.

District Two contains the neighborhoods of Pawtuxet, Gaspee Plateau, and Governor Francis Farm. Historic Pawtuxet Village and Narragansett Parkway are key features. Located in the northeast corner of Warwick, District 2 is bounded by water on three sides; the Pawtuxet river to the north, Narragansett Bay to the east, and Spring Green Brook and Occupessatuxet Cove on the south. Districts 1 and 2 share a common border along Warwick Avenue and River Street; the concentrated commercialization along Warwick Avenue carries impacts that effect both districts.

District Three lies between the Amtrak corridor and the City's western border. Its southern boundary begins where the Pawtuxet River meets the City line south of Route 295. From there it runs a circuitous route following Bald Hill Road, Route 113, Greenwich Avenue, and the boundaries of several plats to Ink up with the Amtrak Corridor. District 3 contains the mill village of Pontiac, which is predominately residential. The remainder of the district is zoned for commercial and industrial uses. Several features within District 3 make it more susceptible to development forces than many other districts in the City. The location of the Rhode Island and Warwick Malls, as well as Routes 295, 95 and the Airport Connector, bring traffic and congestion through District 3. Continued growth at Metro Center and projected expansion of the City's sewage treatment plant will place additional development pressures on this district.

District Four is bounded by Post Road to the west and Warwick Avenue to the east. The southern boundary follows the airport's southern border to Cedar Swamp Road and along Sandy Lane to Warwick Avenue. It is comprised of the Plats that surround Green State Airport to the west, east and north. The congestion that has accompanied the growth of Green State Airport

and the commercial development along Warwick Avenue have isolated the area of Hoxie that lies within the borders of District 4. A similar phenomenon has occurred in residential areas to the north and west of the airport along Post Road.

District Five includes the neighborhoods of Hoxie, Conimicut, and Brookwood. It is bounded on the west by Warwick Avenue. Water bodies comprise the other boundaries of this district; Occupessatuxet Cove to the north, Buckeye Brook to the south and Narragansett Bay to the east. The neighborhood of Hoxie is bounded by two of the City's most congested arteries (Warwick Avenue and West Shore Road), making travel in and out of the neighborhood difficult. The revitalization of the Conimicut commercial district is an example of what an active neighborhood organization can achieve.

District Six lies in the western portion of the City. The district's western boundary follows the city line from the Pawtuxet River to Route 117. It is bounded by Route 113 to the north and Route 117 to the south. The District's eastern border follows a path south from the Route 95-Route 113 interchange, along the boundary of

Plat 246 to Greenwich Avenue and Apponaug Four Corners. The neighborhoods of Natick and Centerville lie on the western edge of the District. District 6 also contains several institutional centers -- Kent County Hospital, Community College of Rhode Island and Tollgate High School. The ongoing commercial development along Bald Hill Road has, in many respects, negatively impacted this district.

District Seven includes the neighborhoods of Greenwood and Apponaug, which is roughly bounded by the Amtrak corridor to the east and Interstate Route 95 to the west. Recent encroachment of commercial development on traditionally residential areas has been a major concern to residents of this district. City Hall is located in Apponaug and the area has a proliferation of historic structures. Additionally, Apponaug Four Corners (intersection of Post Road and Route 117) is a major transportation node within the City.

District Eight is bounded to the north and east by T.F.Green State Airport. The western boundary runs south along the Amtrak corridor to West Shore Road. The southern boundary runs along West Shore Road and part of Sandy Lane. The problems associated with Airport noise and

expansion will continue to impact the neighborhoods in this area (Greenwood East, Strawberry Field, and Wildes Corner). Traffic congestion at Wildes Corner and development along West Shore Road also impact the district adversely.

District Nine consists of Oakland Beach, Meadowbrook, and Wildes Corner. Buckeye Brook serves as a natural boundary to the north, while Warwick and Brushneck Coves mark the district's boundary to the south. West Shore Road cuts across the district from east to west. Concentrated commercial development has occurred around the intersection of Warwick Avenue and Sandy Lane. The waterfront area at Oakland Beach serves as the focus of neighborhood coalition and is the target of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. Warwick Veterans High School and the main branch of the Warwick Public Library serve as major traffic generators within the district.

District Ten lies at the base of Warwick Neck. It is bounded to the north by Buckeye Brook, Narragansett Bay to the east, and Warwick Cove to the west. The neighborhood of Longmeadow and a portion of Warwick Neck lie within the district's boundary.

District Eleven lies on Warwick Neck. Its northern boundary follows a line conterminous to the northern boundaries of Plats 378 and 381. Two golf courses and a large estate owned by the Catholic Diocese of Providence have the greatest impact potential within the district. Large areas of open space in the district may be vulnerable to development.

District Twelve is bounded by water on three sides: Brushneck Cove and Tuskatucket Brook to the East, Greenwich Bay to the South and Apponaug Cove to the west. West Shore Road serves as the district's northern boundary. The City's largest recreational and open space area, City Park, lies in District 12 and is presently undergoing expansion. Events staged by the City draw residents from across the City to District 12. The district is primarily residential in nature and includes the neighborhoods of Buttonwoods, Nausauket, Lockwood, and Arnold's Neck. Additionally, the above-mentioned coastal resources present environmental challenges to new development.

District Thirteen is one of the largest districts in the City, covering the area between Greenwich Bay and Interstate Route 95. Its southern boundary is formed by Division Street, the

Showcase Cinema complex and construction of a commercial development in East Greenwich have the potential for intensifying traffic congestion. Centerville Road (Route 117), a major east-west artery in the City, forms the district's northern boundary. Post Road runs north to south along the eastern edge of the district and serves as a major route between the commercial areas of Apponaug and East Greenwich. A large number of multi-family units and condominiums are located along the waterfront on Post Road. In addition, District 13 contains large parcels of vacant land zoned for both commercial and residential development.

District Fourteen lies between Interstate Route 95 and the West Warwick town line. Intense commercial and residential development along the border in neighboring West Warwick has been mirrored in Warwick on Bald Hill Road. Like

District 13, there are large amounts of vacant land in the district open to development. Intense residential development has so far avoided this district. As a result, there is no concentration of community amenities within the district (e.g. parks, schools, and playgrounds). Continued expansion of commercial development along Bald Hill Road and Quaker Lane, access from Route 95, and proximity to an adjacent industrial park in West Warwick presents an opportunity for industrial development in the southern portion of the district.

District Fifteen includes the neighborhood of Potowomut, is separated from the rest of the City by the Town of East Greenwich and Greenwich Bay. This physical isolation and the location of state-owned Goddard Park are factor's effecting the district's identity within the City.

Demographic Profile

Income Characteristics- According to the 1990 US Census, the median family income for Warwick was \$42, 120. This figure was 7.5 percent above the state median \$39, 172. The distribution of income is represented below:

Table 1
Family Income Distribution, City of Warwick

<u>Income Group</u>	<u>No. of Families</u>	<u>% of Total Families</u>
Under \$5000	227	1.0
\$5,000 to \$9,999	520	2.1
\$10,000 to \$14,999	1,163	5.0
\$15,000 to \$24, 999	3,020	13.0
\$25,000 to \$34,999	3,686	15.7
\$35, 000 to \$49,999	6,067	25.9
\$50,000 and above	8,709	37.2
Total	23, 392	100.0

Source: U.S. Census of Population, 1990

According to the 1990 census, the median value of an owner occupied home in Warwick was \$116,000. The income required to purchase a \$116,000 house would be \$48,583. Following this assumption, a review of the figures in Table 2- 1 indicates that nearly 60 percent of the families living in Warwick could not afford the median value house. The 1988 American Housing Survey provides further information on the income characteristics of Warwick homeowners and renters. (See Table 2)

Table 2
Income Household in Warwick, RI (per unit)

Household by Income	Total Renters	Total Owners
Very Low Income (0-50%)	2,700	2,100
Low Income (51-80%)	2,050	2,650
Total Low Income	4,750	3,750
Moderate Income (81-95%)	1,010	1,650
Middle Income (96-120%)	2,040	2,100
All Households	10,200	20,500

Source: 1988 American Housing Survey

Demographic information from the Survey identified elderly occupants of rental units in Warwick as

totaling 3,000, while elderly homeowners accounted for 5,800 housing units. Thus, the elderly comprise nearly one-third of all rentals and over one-fourth of all owner occupied units in the City.

The shift in income distribution indicates a polarization of the population as the higher income groups increase substantially, while the lower income groups remain stable. With this overview of income distribution or Warwick in mind, one can better understand the economic constraints of those wishing to purchase a home in Warwick.

With respect to families and individuals identified by the 1990 US Census as living below the poverty level, the following tables provide a clearer representation.

Table 3
Families below the Poverty Level (BPL)

Family Type	No. of Families	Percent of Total Families
Total Families BPL	742	3.2
Total Families BPL w/children under 18	519	2.1
Female Head of Household BPL	352	1.5
Female Head of Household BPL w/children under 18	333	1.3
Families w/o Children BPL	223	0.9
Total Families	23,392	

Source: U.S. Census, 1990

Table 4
Persons and Unrelated Individuals (BPL)

Person Type	No. of Individuals	Percent of Total Persons
Total Persons BPL	4,078	4.8
Persons 65 and over BPL	1,091	8.0
Unrelated Individuals	12,087	14.5
Unrelated Individuals BPL	1,750	2.0

Source: U.S. Census, 1990

The City of Warwick Community Development Office identified the concentrations of low/moderate income families according to Census Tracts. The following table indicates the percentage of low/moderate income families to determine area eligibility of Community Development Block Grants disbursed through HUD.

Table 5
Percentage of Low/Moderate Income Families

Area Name	Census Tract	Population	Percent Low/ Moderate Income
Pawtuxet	210	8,014	36.94
Norwood/Hillsgrove	211	5,979	40.02
Norwood/Pilgrim	212	4,182	36.68
Gov. Francis Farms	213	5,250	23.47
Hoxie	214.01	4,807	34.20
Hoxie-Conimicut	214.02	3,871	28.67
Conimicut-Shawmut	215.01	3,396	45.47
Longmeadow	215.02	4,333	36.42
Warwick Neck	216	1,453	17.27
Oakland Beach	217	5,335	47.99
Oakland Beach Heights	218	3,799	36.83
Greenwood	219.01	4,752	30.28
Wilde's Corner	219.02	3,138	37.19
Buttonwoods	219.03	4,707	22.75
Apponaug-Nausocket	220	3,501	41.59
Greenwood	221	5,526	26.11
Cowesett	222.01	5,940	18.84
Cowesett	222.02	2,165	34.27
Natick/E.Natick Pontiac	223	3,492	47.85
Potowomut	224	2,550	24.51

Source: U.S. Census, 1990

Racial and Ethnic Characteristics-The City of Warwick's population has been predominantly white with minorities accounting for less than three percent. A comparison of 1980 and 1990 Census data indicates that Warwick's non-white population has nearly doubled (see Table 6). The Planning Department projects that minority representation will continue to rise, while the white population decreases. Three factors are cited for this shift, differing birth rates, the influx of new immigrants, and the migration of individuals and families from the Providence urban core.

Table 6
Racial and Ethnic Population, 1980, 1990

Race	1980	% of Total	1990	% of Total	Percent Difference
White	86,539	98.4	83,695	97.02	-1.39
Black	409	0.48	673	0.78	0.30
American Indian	96	0.12	183	0.21	0.09
Asian	358	0.42	713	0.83	0.41
Spanish	504	0.57	845	0.98	0.41
Other	0	0.0	163	0.19	0.19

Total	87,906	100.0	86,272	100.0	-1.86
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Source: U.S. Census, 1990

CHAPTER 4

HOUSING AND DEMAND

This chapter is intended to determine current and future demand for single family, multi-family, subsidized and elderly public housing, and other special needs housing. Housing demand is a multi-dimensional issue involving demography, economic markets, and the needs of special populations. The URI CPAD study examined the future demand for housing in Warwick in the context of local and regional indicators of housing demand.

It is important to draw a distinction between short-term changes and long-term trends when researching housing demand indicators. According to Planner and Economist Ray Robinson:

"If it is the short run that is of immediate concern, a study will usually tend to concentrate upon economic determinants of demand such as income, price and credit terms, assigning only a subsidiary role to socio-demographic factors. This emphasis is appropriate because it can usually be assumed that demographic factors will remain unchanged in the short run. Thus it is the impact of changes in income tax, credit availability, or of rent supplement programs upon the existing population's housing demand which is of immediate interest to a community's short-term policy advisors. In the long-term, however, the socio-demographic factors become important; indeed, they are often considered more important and predictable than most economic variables. Accordingly, in forecasting, the emphasis shifts to projections of population, household formation rates, household size distributions, etc., and the housing requirements associated with them."⁶

The URI CPAD study undertook an analysis of long-term demand. Issues commonly associated with short-range analysis, such as interest rates and demand elasticity, have been omitted. Analysis was undertaken using socio-demographic data to predict intermediate and long range demand for housing.

The demand research was comprised of four types of analysis: demographic, income and occupation distribution, transportation-related, and the needs of special populations. This section addresses demand at the local level and its relationship to the central elements of the study. In addition, this section assesses the demand for specific housing types as they relate to family composition. Inventory and evaluation of single family, multi-family, subsidized, and elderly units, complement the section on housing supply

Methodology and Data Sources

The URI CPAD study reviewed historic trends

and future demand for housing in the City of Warwick through examination of such state and local indicators as demographic base, economic and housing market characteristics, transportation impacts, and the housing requirements of the City's special needs groups (e.g. elderly population, physically and mentally handicapped).

To enable an accurate evaluation of housing demand within the City of Warwick, the analysis focussed on the housing needs of certain socio-demographic groups and their historic, current, and projected consumption of specific housing types.

The 1970 and 1980 *General Population Characteristics and Detailed Housing Characteristics for Rhode Island*, published by the U.S. Bureau of Census, were utilized to provide a time series perspective. These data were compared to current data provided by CACI, an independent demographic/market research firm. Estimates for the year 1988 were then supplemented by figures presented in the Warwick Affordable Housing Board's *City of Warwick Affordable Housing Study* (1988). Further figures and projections were obtained from the State Division of Planning for the years 1985 through 2020. This source was used to show population projections for certain key

sectors of the Warwick population. Rhode Island Department of Education school enrollment projections were used as a symptomatic indicator to support these projections.

With demographic data as the basis for analysis, other indications of demand were examined. These included a trend analysis of the housing market in Warwick and an economic profile used to gain insight into pressures for various types of housing stock resulting from employment patterns and income distribution. Database-derived information pertaining to house prices, rents, length of time on the market, and other indicators of housing demand were used to measure the balance between the spending power of Warwick's residents and the range of housing opportunities available to them.

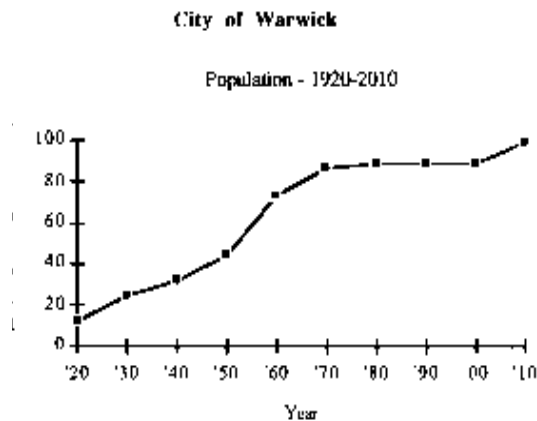
Finally, special needs groups and their housing requirements were reviewed by quantifying their housing needs and conducting a discrepancy analysis between the number of subsidized housing units in Warwick and the population they are meant to serve.

Historic and Current Trends of Demand Demographic Base Indicators

Historic demographic trends in Warwick between 1920 and 2010 show a dramatic increase of population until 1970, when the increase became much more gradual, rising only from 83,694 in 1970 to 87,123 in 1980 to and actually decreasing to 85,427 in 1990. This increase is significantly less than the surges in population

characterizing the decades previous to 1970, when an increase of 16,000 per decade was not uncommon (see Figure 2). When examining recent trends in Warwick in view of the continued demand for housing, it becomes apparent that demand is being fueled not by increasing population but by a reshaping of the socio-demographic composition of the community.

Figure 2
City of Warwick



Source: Statewide Planning Projections 1980-2010 and City of Warwick Monograph

In light of this finding, the primary indicators of future demand are those that exert pressure on the existing housing stock. These include household formations (namely household size and number) and an analysis of the key age groups which have the greatest influence on which types of housing units will be required to accommodate the City's population.

Household Formation

"It is important to note that a household, in terms of statistical count, is not equivalent to a family. The Census Bureau identifies two major categories of households: family (which must include a householder and at least one other person related through marriage, birth, or adoption) and non-family households (composed of a householder living alone or with non-relatives). The number of households is always the same as the number of occupied year-round housing units, since the definition of a household is essentially a person or persons

occupying a housing unit."⁷

The trend of decreasing household size has important implications with regard to its impact on housing demand. With fewer people per household, there will likely be a demand for more housing units. It can be assumed that demand is high in terms of both rental and owner occupied housing units. A comparison of median household size in 1970, 1980, and 1988 supports this hypothesis. The median household size in 1970 was 3.10. This decreased to 2.77 in 1980 and further to an estimated 2.52 in 1990.

These shifts in household formation mirror trends occurring on the state level. The demand placed on Warwick's housing stock has been influenced in large part by the trend toward suburban growth experienced by communities that ring the State's greater metropolitan area. For example, a comparison of the proportion of single person households between the years 1970 and 1980 reveals a 52.9% growth rate.⁸

It is highly likely that socio-demographic forces at the state level will have a significant impact on the demand for housing at the local level. Thus, it may be anticipated that more housing units will be required to accommodate a substantially larger number of smaller, non-traditional households. A

continuation of this trend in Warwick suggests that alternatives to Warwick's traditional housing stock will be required to accommodate smaller households.

Another indicator of shifts in household formation that would put pressure on Warwick's existing housing stock is the significant increase in the divorce rate in Kent County (of which the City of Warwick constitutes 60%). In 1982, divorces totaled 897. By 1987, this number had risen to 1,142, an increase of 21.5%.⁹ This significant increase has important implications on the size and composition of households within the County.

A continued increase in the number of single person households will further shift the emphasis away from traditional family housing types or will lead to a rise in households consisting of unrelated individuals. Further findings in the Affordable Housing Study (1988), such as an in-migration rate which exceeds the out-migration rate, lead to the conclusion that a combination of elements is creating pressures on the housing stock in the City of Warwick. The above findings on the local level mirror trends at the state level. In 1970 the average household size within the state was 3.10. By 1980 that size had decreased to 2.70. During this period the number of occupied year-round housing units rose by 16 %, an actual

increase of 46,625. From 1970 to 1980 the population at the state level increased by 21,000, while approximately 19,000 housing units were built. This equates to the creation of 0.9 housing units for each additional person. This means that for each person joining the State population total, a new housing unit was built a further dramatic indicator of decreasing household size on the state level.¹⁰

Demographic Base Indicators

Future population projections for the City of Warwick undertaken by Statewide Planning show that through the year 2010, the population will remain relatively constant. An increase of 2.09% over the thirty-year period from 1980 - 2010 is expected. This growth is minuscule when compared with the dramatic population growth experienced by the City in the years from 1930 through 1970, when the population grew from 23,196 in 1930 to 83,694 in 1970.

Key Cohort Group Analysis

Three key age cohorts were identified as showing the most significant shifts over time within the City of Warwick; 0-14, 25-34, and over 65. These groups each have an important role in determining the type of housing needed. For example, the number of children will have an impact on the

demand for Warwick's traditional housing type, the single-family house.

Statewide Planning projections for the key age groups (0-14, 25-34, and over 65) provide a picture of the anticipated size of these groups into the next century. Using the year 1980 as the base, Statewide Planning projections provide five-year intervals for the change over time. Statewide planning figures for the population of the state through the year 2020 anticipates a growth of 12.1%. This figure is high relative to the projected growth for the population of the City of Warwick through the year 2020, which is projected to at a marginal rate of 2.8%.

The decline in the number of children suggests a decline in the demand for the most common type of housing which has traditionally been constructed during the 1960's and 1970's conformed to the housing needs of the population at that time, and may no longer be adequate for the present and future population structure. While more families are moving into Warwick they typically have fewer children, and therefore have less of an impact on the school system.

As this discussion shows, Warwick's population is getting older. This will have short and long-

term impacts on Warwick's housing and on City services. In the short run, the growing number of retirees on fixed incomes means that the City will have to seriously consider developing programs to help what is in some ways an at risk population.

Warwick's senior population is considered at risk in that home maintenance can become increasingly difficult for seniors on a fixed income. Programs that provide financial mechanisms to lighten the burden of home maintenance accomplish two objectives. First, they allow senior homeowners to remain in their homes; second, they help to prevent deterioration of housing stock that can result from deferred maintenance.

The City will also have to work in the private sector to insure that an adequate supply of subsidized housing exists for those who need it.

In the long term, as senior homeowners die or move Warwick's substantial supply of entry-level housing will be occupied by a new generation of families with children moving out of the urban core. As young families, many with children replace retirees; demands on City services will change to meet the needs of two income

households, single-parent households, multi-generational households, etc.

Table 7
Population of Key Cohorts

YEAR	0-14	25-34	65+	WARWICK	STATE
1980	17,736	13,338	11,267	87,123	947,154
1985	15,830	13,415	12,731	87,880	967,911
1990	15,586	14,440	14,426	87,656	1,002,645
1995	16,274	14,665	15,320	87,982	1,022,479
2000	15,989	12,312	15,387	88,320	1,037,400
2005	14,988	10,056	15,380	88,649	1,048,820
2010	13,872	9,885	16,357	88,987	1,059,706
2015	13,316	10,801	18,416	88,319	1,070,251
2020	13,293	11,139	20,445	89,652	1,077,962

Source: RI Department of Statewide Planning

An analysis of the percentage growth of the three select cohorts reveals that these sectors of the City of Warwick's population are growing or shrinking at a rate out of step with that of the total population of the City and the State. From 1980 through the projected figures for the year 2020, it is anticipated that the 0-14 cohort will decrease 33%. If this proves to be the case, school enrollment numbers will continue to decrease and affect the need for the traditional size family home.

Statistics provided by the Rhode Island Department of Education for the City of Warwick point to a different tendency than that indicated

by the Statewide Planning

projections. As Table 7 illustrates, these projections point to a net increase in the numbers of students enrolled in the Warwick school system. The discrepancy here could be explained by the fact that the impetus for growth will not be a result of natural increase, but rather from in-migration to the City. Additionally, the 25-34 cohort is projected to show a decline of 19.7%. This implies a continuation of the trend that has been occurring since 1970. This could lead to a continuing reduction in the pool of first time homebuyers. It also reflects the changing patterns within U.S. society, with persons staying single

longer and having fewer children, and at a later age.

Table 8
Projected School Enrollment
City of Warwick

Year	Total
1990-91	11,592
1991-92	11,911
1992-93	12,167
1993-94	12,447
1994-95	12,717
1995-96	12,938
1996-97	13,197
1997-98	13,385
1998-99	13,532

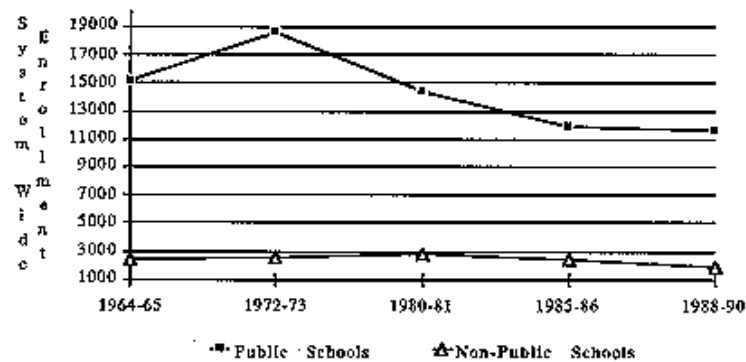
Source: RI Department of Education Enrollment Projection Systems

The 0-14 Age Group-Enrollment data provided by the Rhode Island and Warwick Departments of Education, used as symptomatic data to support the Census Bureau and CACI findings, indicate a decline in this cohort. In a time series analysis examining total school enrollment in Warwick (see Figure 2.2), a sharp increase can be seen followed by a long and steady decrease until the present. Public school enrollment increased about 18 percent from the mid-1960's to mid-1970, while total population increased only 10 percent. Enrollment peaked at approximately 18,600 in the mid-1970's, and declined sharply by the early 1980's, while total population increased less than 1 percent from the

mid-1970's to 1980. These figures support the notion that family size is shrinking.

The decline in the number of children suggests a decline in the demand for the most common type of housing which has traditionally been constructed in the City, single family units. This could indicate that the single family housing constructed during the 1960's and 1970's conformed to the housing needs of the population at that time, and may no longer be adequate for the present and future population structure. While more families are moving into Warwick they typically have fewer children, and therefore have less of an impact on the school system.

Figure 3
Historic Enrollment Trends in the Warwick School System



Source: Rhode Island Department of Economic Development

The 25-34 Age Group:

Historic trend analysis indicated a significant increase in the number of persons of home-buying age (25-34) between 1970 (9,072 -- U.S. Census), 1980 (13,338 -- U.S. Census) and 1988 (12,282 -- CACI figures). Although the figures provided by CACI project a decline for 1988 relative to the 1980 numbers, these numbers still represent a significant increase over 1970. Similar national and statewide trends also have an impact on the types of housing demanded by the population of Warwick.

The Over-65 Group:

This cohort has demonstrated a marked increase in relative size, keeping pace with regional and national trends. In 1970, this cohort numbered 7,785. By 1980 this figure had risen to 11,267,

and by 1988 the numbers had escalated to 14,952 (CACI figures). The 1970 to 1988 changes represent an increase of 47.94%. This change in the numbers of persons in the over 65 cohort will inevitably result in changes in the types of housing demanded by a growing segment of the City's population.

A comparison of the current over 65 population to the number of elderly units available in Warwick revealed that a considerable discrepancy exists. While the over 65 population is at present estimated to be 14,592 (CACI figures) the number of elderly units totals 1,603 (Statewide Planning Technical Paper # 134). A ratio of the estimated elderly population to the number of housing units available indicated only one unit for every ten persons over the age of 65

in public elderly housing. This discrepancy will only be exacerbated as the proportion of elderly Warwick residents grows, as shown by Statewide Planning projections.

In the long term, as home owned by seniors become available, the increased supply of entry level housing will be occupied by a new generation of families with children moving out of the urban core. As young families, many with children replace retirees; demands on City services will change requiring changes in funding allocations. This change will not eliminate the need for housing programs, but the nature and focus of those programs will change to meet the needs of different types of families. In terms of the significance of these figures, the over-65 population within the City currently stands at 14,592 (CACI figures). This figure relative to the total current over 65 population represents a ratio of 9:1, indicating a discrepancy in availability of one unit for every ten persons over the age of 65 in public elderly housing. The remainder of the elderly population may be served by the private market, but in light of the projected increase in the over-65 population, the demand for elderly public housing, as well as private elderly housing can be expected to increase.

Demand By Special Needs Groups

Affordable housing comprises a special part of the demand equation. In the City of Warwick Affordable Housing Study,¹¹ a distinction is made with reference to the mainstream "market demand", as opposed to the less typical "non-market" demand. The market refuses to respond to the needs of special group because this demand in "non-market" and because the need groups have little money, and development of lowest housing is less profitable.

Three population groups with relatively low historical rates of homeownership have grown substantially: families headed by single parents, households composed of unrelated individuals, and persons living alone. While the number of renter households has grown, production of multi-family units has not kept pace. Several factors account for the low levels of production in the rental sector: the 1986 Tax Reform Act made multi-family development less profitable; federal funds for rent subsidies were drying up; and the growing renter population is increasingly low income and unable to support the high cost of new market rate development.

Household changes have had an enormous impact on subsidized housing throughout the state. In the 1960s the majority of poor were

large, two-parent families with children and the elderly. Today, most of the poor in Rhode Island are single-parent families with children. The poor of the past included families that quickly moved out of poverty. The present poor population has been slower to move out of poverty resulting in slower turnover of residents in assisted housing.

The City's special needs population includes elderly persons; people residing in subsidized

housing; people with mental and/or physical disabilities; homeless persons; female single parents; heads of household on public support; battered persons; young housing market entrants; and renters in substandard housing. Drawn from the City's 1991 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), projects the housing assistance needs of several of these special needs groups.

Table 9
Housing Type and Income

Income	Elderly 1 & 2 member households	Small related (2-4)	Large related (5 or more)	All other households	Total renters
Very low income (0-50%)	505	883	85	0	1,473
Other low income (51-80%)	317	492	85	0	894
Total low income	822	1,375	170	0	2,367

Source: Warwick Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), Table 1A; 1991.

According to the state Department of Mental Health, Retardation, and Hospitals and the Department of Children and their Families, the inventory of community residences in the City of Warwick totals 85.

State Guide Plan Element 422 divides Rhode Island into six housing market areas for the

purpose of analysis. Warwick is located within the West Bay housing market area. The West Bay's market's low income and minority household concentration results in an identified housing assistance need which represents approximately 22 percent of Rhode Island's total identified need. The largest component of this need is small family households, which represent

53 percent of the total. This is followed by elderly households (38 percent) and large families (9 percent).

According to the City of Warwick Affordable Housing Study (1988), the Warwick Housing Authority maintains 483 units of housing for the elderly, 8 of these are for the handicapped.

The need for additional handicap accessible housing is evident when you examine the 1990 Census. The Census found a total of 9,871 persons with some form of mobility or self care impairment. Of this total, 5,279 persons were between the ages of 16 and 64.

The study further notes that the numbers of elderly persons on private, federally assisted housing waiting lists is large. Notably, some developments are reporting waiting lists with upwards of 300 persons per unit.

The Study notes that between July 1987 and June 1988, Warwick Community Action Program's (WCAP) Temporary Emergency Shelter Program assisted a total of 132 homeless individuals. WCAP estimates that the number of homeless persons in the City of Warwick totals 346.

Economic Indicators of Demand

Another important element in the City's housing demand equation is the economic profile of the community. The City's economic structure has various dimensions including: 1) the City's occupational distribution, 2) the City's income distribution, and 3) the relationship between the incomes of those who live in Warwick and their ability to afford specific housing types within the City. Several important points must be kept in mind when examining these economic characteristics. First, Warwick's fastest growing employment sectors, retail and service, represent relatively low-paying jobs compared to those in the manufacturing sector. Secondly, Warwick's residents are generally more affluent than those who work within the City.

Additionally, as with demographic indicators, the City's economic profile must be viewed from a regional perspective with regard to its relationship with housing demand. In order to fully evaluate the constraints on home buying in Warwick, the potential market must be divided into two groups -- those from within the City and those from other parts of the State and beyond. It may not be possible, for instance, for someone employed in Warwick to buy a home in the City due to a substantial proportion of low-paying retail and service employment opportunities.

The City's Economic Profile

Numerous studies have characterized Warwick's economy as one experiencing rapid growth, particularly in the retail and service sectors. Manufacturing, once a dominant force in the City's economic base, has declined in importance to an approximate 25% of the overall economic

picture (see Table 2.4). From an economic perspective, this shift from a reliance on manufacturing to a reliance on retail and services signifies, as the Planning Department noted in its Economic and Fiscal Trends Study, a "significant shift in the ratio of non-basic to basic employment".¹²

Table 10
Warwick Economic Base Profile

Sector	1970	1980	1985
Manufacturing	50%	31%	24%
Retail	27%	28%	32%
Service	10%	21%	25%

While its population grew by only 4.1 percent between 1970 and 1980, the City experienced employment growth rates of 95 percent during the same period; the work force within Warwick grew from 14,999 to 29,283.¹³ In short, the City's economy has grown steadily despite the

virtual leveling off of its population base. The coupling of demographics with the community's economic base and the resultant spending power of its residents has the greatest impact on demand.

Table 11
Average Per Capita Yearly Wages in Rhode Island's Six Largest Cities

City	1970	1985	1970-1985 Percent Change
East Providence	\$6,792	\$16,842	147%
Providence	6,346	6,738	163%
STATE	6,082	15,485	154%
Pawtucket	5,807	14,761	154%
Cranston	6,292	14,691	133%
WARWICK	5,805	14,014	141%
Woonsocket	5,576	13,246	137%

Source: Economic/Fiscal Trends 1970-85.

Note: The above figures have not been adjusted for inflation. They merely serve to illustrate the proportional differences among the various incomes.

Wages are another component of the economic vitality of a community; they determine the ability of its members to afford housing. In Warwick, the wages of those working within the City have lagged behind most other communities in the state, both in average yearly wages and in rate of increase. This is indicated by Table 2.4. In comparison to the other six largest cities in Rhode Island, Warwick had the second lowest average wages earned in 1970 and 1985. Although more recent data is not available, it can be assumed that wages earned in Warwick have not increased significantly because of the increasing prominence

of the retail and service sectors in the economy. Because of the relatively small proportion of Warwick's residents that are employed in the City, it is necessary to look beyond Warwick in examining the gap between incomes and house prices within the City to determine the degree of affordability offered within it. Warwick has mirrored trends at the state level in manufacturing decline and growth in both the retail and service sectors. However, no other Rhode Island community has experienced such rapid economic growth in terms of employment during the period discussed earlier. Warwick accounted for 28

percent of Rhode Island's employment rate increase between 1980 and 1985.

The Widening Gap between Income and House Prices

Viewed at the state level, it can be seen that the improved condition of Rhode Island's economy during the mid-1980s contributed a significant degree to increased housing demand; median household income rose from \$19,683 in 1980 to \$31,200 in 1986. From 1980 to 1982, income gains kept pace with gains in home prices. However, with income levels rising 10.5 percent from 1984-1986, the gain has been outstripped by Rhode Island housing prices, which have increased by 59.2 percent over this time period.

However, house prices in Warwick are still relatively affordable compared to other communities in the state. The median house price during the third economic quarter of 1989 was among the lowest in the state at \$110,000, with only Providence (excluding the East Side) and Central Falls having lower median prices. In contrast, neighboring East Greenwich had the highest median house price at \$242,000. A market analysis conducted by the URI CPAD study group revealed that homes in Warwick remained on the market for an average of 77.6 days (a relatively short time compared to neighboring East Greenwich, with an average of 114.8 days; therefore, it is assumed that Warwick acts as a magnet for both first time homebuyers and smaller households.

Table 12

1989 Median Home Purchase Price, Income, & Income Needed to Purchase in Selected RI Communities

Factor	Warwick	Providence	Cranston	W. Warwick	Coventry
Median 1989 Sale Price	110,000	100,000	124,000	116,500	118,000
Median 1989 Income	40,185	28,208	38,970	34,594	40,125
Income Needed to Purchase	46,102	43,434	51,486	48,379	46,851
30% Income Nec. to Purchase	13,831	13,030	15,446	14,514	14,055
Monthly Housing Expense	1,153	1,086	1,287	1,209	1,171
Property Taxes (Monthly)	192.	213.	204.	192.	141.
Hazard Insurance/PMI (Monthly)	55.	50.	62.	58.	59.
Mortgage Payment	906.	823.	1,021	959.	971.
Amount Financed @ 9%	99,000	90,000	111,600	104,850	106,200
Down Payment 10%	11,000	10,000	12,400	11,650	11,800

Sources: 1989 Median Sale Price: Compilation of Real Estate Transfers, published annually by the RI Dept. of Admin. Property Taxes: Computed by RI Housing based on equalized rate as reported by RI Office of Municipal Affairs, RIPEC. All others: RI Housing Research.

Analysis of market characteristics based on MLS sales data revealed that there are sharp differences in the cost of housing within the City. Although the citywide median sales price was \$110,000 in 1990, only six of the fifteen districts studied had sales prices at or below that price. All of these districts lie east of Post Road in areas that contain older, more traditional neighborhoods. These neighborhoods have higher densities and are impacted by problems associated with traffic congestion and T.F.Green State Airport. Districts 11, 13, and 14 have

sharply higher home prices than the rest of the city. These districts are characterized by larger lots and homes. Fluctuations of time on market by district appear to be tied more to characteristics of individual properties than to any overall demand trend.

Analysis of the remaining sales data did reveal that two-family homes provide one of the best opportunities for affordable housing. The median selling price of a two-family house in Warwick was \$127,000. This makes the cost per unit

\$63,500 or 53% of the cost of a single family home. While Warwick has a sizable stock of multi-family housing, over 20 percent of these units are condominium units. They are only accessible to those households that have the economic means to buy into home ownership. The median sales price of a condominium in Warwick was \$94,500 or 85% of the cost of a single family home. Condominiums have, on average, only 1.9 bedrooms per unit, which limits their use for families.

Income and Rent Affordability as Demand Indicators

Indicators of availability and affordability of rental property in the City of Warwick were analyzed

by examining the classified advertisements in the Providence Journal/Bulletin on three successive Sundays (February 18, February 25, and March 4, 1990). The information from the classified advertisements of rental property was entered into a database that designated the following fields:

- 1) the neighborhood location of the rental unit if identified by the advertisement,
- 2) the number of bedrooms in the unit,
- 3) the advertised monthly rent and indication of utility inclusion ,
- 5) the adjusted rent which displays all rents without the cost of utilities, and
- 6) a multiplication factor to adjust rents precluding utilities

Table 13
Household Incomes in Warwick, Rhode Island (per unit)

Household by Income	Total Renters	Total Owners
Very Low Income (0-50%)	2,700	2,100
Low Income (51-80%)	2,050	2,650
Total Low Income	4,750	3,750
Moderate Income (81-95%)	1,010	1,650
Middle Income (96-120%)	2,040	2,100
All Households	10,200	20,500

Source: 1988 American Housing Survey.

Table 14
Median Adjusted Rents
City of Warwick

Efficiency	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	4 Bedroom
\$385	\$495	\$705	\$750	\$850

Source: A Study of Housing for Warwick, RI (URI CPAD , 1990)

The mean rent for all rental property in the City of Warwick, without utilities was \$509/month. The median rent was \$560/month. When bedrooms are factored into the rental equation, the median adjusted rents for type of apartment can be seen in table 13. This indicates that the median rent in

Warwick fluctuates between \$560 and \$615 per month. On a regional level (i.e. Kent County), Warwick's rents are second highest, following East Greenwich, with West Warwick having the lowest median rent in Kent County, \$525 (see Table 14).

Table 15
Median Rents - Kent County

WARWICK	\$615/month
West Warwick	\$525/month
East Greenwich	\$650/month
Coventry	\$550/month
West Greenwich	\$550/month

Source: Warwick Community Action, 1990.

The rent in Warwick was compared to the income of its residents to evaluate their ability to afford housing in the City. Assuming a median monthly rent figure of \$615, based on the standard 30% of household income is going to rent.

will be a widening gap between affluent and low-to-moderate income residents. While median income has steadily increased, there has also been a growth in lower wage-earning sectors, particularly in retail and service employment.

Based on income and occupation patterns, there

To examine how the median income in Warwick

would change, the CACI data for 1980, 1988, as well as a projected 1993 figure was used by the students as an index. The CACI data for Warwick is divided by Zip Code (Warwick has three Zip Code zones), with a total being derived by calculating the average of the three figures given. According to the data, the median household income in Warwick in 1980 was \$18,723. By 1988, this had risen to \$31,187. The projected median income for 1993 was anticipated to be \$35,211. Therefore, an income increase of 66 percent occurred between 1980 and 1988. The level of income was expected to

increase by 13 percent by 1993. On the down side, there were 6,015 households making less than \$15,000 a year in Warwick, according to the 1990 Census. This represents eighteen (18) percent of all households in the City. More than eleven (11) percent of the 1,533 female-headed families with children live below the poverty line. The trend of polarizing income distributions will mean that low and moderate-income residents will experience ongoing erosion in their ability to afford decent housing. Table 12 demonstrates the income gap for low-income renters.

Table 16
Average Rent and Median Renter Income in Warwick, 1990

Average rent, 2 bedroom, 1990	\$657/month
Affordable rent for \$5/hour wage earner	\$260/month
Affordable rent for AFDC family of 3	\$224/month
Number of very-low income persons (earning less than \$20,300 per year)	3,249 persons

Source: 1990 U.S. Census, Rhode Island Housing Annual Data Collection

Transportation as an Indicator of Housing Demand

Historically, Warwick developed as a series of villages linked by roads. Post Road, which served as the main route from Boston to Washington D.C., intersects the City and was an early site for development. Early development also included as farming homesteads and coastal

communities. Conversion of summer residences to permanent residences and the loss of the central business district to the formation of the Town of West Warwick in 1913, led to commercial development along the roads linking villages. Increased use of the automobile and the installation of a trolley system allowed residents of

Providence to move to northern sections of Warwick and to commute to work in the City.

In 1931 the T.F. Green State Airport was constructed, effectively separating the eastern and western sections of the City. After World War II the popularity of the automobile, coupled with Farmers Home Administration and Veterans Administration mortgage programs led to large-scale subdivision development in Warwick, as farmland was converted to residential use. Post Road was still the principal artery in Warwick and it began to undergo heavy commercial development. Route I-95 was completed 1966 and was followed by the completion of Route I-295 in 1968. These highways have had a major impact on development and transportation patterns throughout the City. Access points have attracted commercial, industrial, and residential development. Route I-95 cuts through the City's western side and creates service access problems. There are only seven points at which vehicular traffic can cross over or under the interstate. As of 1985, total acreage used for transportation and public utilities was 206, or just under 1% of the City's total land area. In recent times, residents have complained of traffic congestion and the amount of time required to travel from eastern parts of the City to I-95.

Many see the congestion as degradation in the quality of life. In order to take advantage of the easy access to interstate highways, developers, from the mid-1960's on built large apartment complexes close to the highway access points. Many of these apartment dwellers commute to work in other communities. The proximity of regional retail centers spurred commercial development southward on Bald Hill Road (Route 2). Apartment complexes and condominiums followed. Given the fact that a substantial portion of the City's undeveloped lots are in the eastern part of the City, further development seems likely to aggravate the problem.

Summary

This analysis has examined demographic and economic aspects of housing demand in the City of Warwick. Other elements that influence demand, such as transportation, were also touched upon. This information is intended to be used in the identification of issues and concerns and in the development of programs and policies which will address housing demand. Demographic analysis revealed that, although there has been a dramatic slowdown of growth in Warwick, socio-demographic trends (increased divorce rate, decreased number of children, a

growing elderly population, etc.) have transformed housing demand in Warwick as well as in other Rhode Island communities. Market pressures shift as these groups change in size within the relatively stable population and create demand for certain housing types. Warwick's sizable stock of multifamily homes, including condominiums (22% of total units), do provide a number of housing options for the City's growing number of single-person and small family households. An economic profile and income distribution analysis reveal that there is significant growth in middle to upper income groups, while conditions in lower income groups has been stable. Market activity has addressed higher income group demand, and lack of a profit motive has limited private low to middle-income

housing initiatives.

Additionally, the dominance of retail and service sectors of employment with generally low wages indicate that there is a need for more affordable housing in the City. This need is being addressed on a small scale by several non-profit organizations such as JONAH (an organization that focuses on housing repair and subsidies), Shelter Service Inc., the Warwick Community Action Program, House of Hope, and others. Lower-income and special needs groups require alternative housing types. In the absence of competitive market forces to address this "unprofitable" sector of demand, it is likely that special needs will not be met. Additional governmental initiatives may be necessary to accommodate the needs of citizens.

CHAPTER 3

HOUSING SUPPLY

Introduction

A key component in determining the housing needs of the City of Warwick is an analysis of the existing housing stock and a forecast of future housing production. A picture of the current and historical dynamics of the housing market in Warwick was derived by performing an inventory of the types of residential structures built since 1960 and then factoring in the impact of local and regional economies. Forecasts of future housing production were based on an examination of the historical production data in light of past interest rates and the availability of suitable vacant land.

Warwick was identified as an urban community in which potential for further growth is constrained by a limited supply of buildable land. To assess the impacts of development constraints on future production a build-out analysis was conducted to determine the amount of land that is suitable for development in order to substantiate or undermine this hypothesis.

Methodology and Data Collection

Five primary characteristics were used by URI CPAD to describe the existing housing supply: type, production levels, location, age of property, and size. The type of housing was categorized as single family and multi-family. For comparison purposes, multi-family units were further categorized as apartments, duplexes, or subsidized housing.

Three major characteristics were used to project Warwick's future residential development: prime interest rate, vacant land, and population

characteristics. Vacant land was indexed as underdeveloped, undeveloped conforming, and non-conforming vacant land. population parameters included: household size, projected total population, and projected number of school age children. Several quantitative methods were used to describe the historical and current dynamics between the availability and affordability of housing in Warwick:

Regional and local comparison,
Time series analysis,
MLS housing stock market analysis,
Analysis of rental units,
Linear regression analysis, and

Build-out projections (see Supplement to Land Use Plan).

Findings

Regional Comparison of Housing Supply

Rhode Island Basic Economic Statistics (1987) provided the primary source of data on the type and number of dwelling units statewide and for four comparable municipalities: Providence, Warwick, Cranston, and Pawtucket. Analysis of Warwick's share of the housing market was performed by comparing the percentage of dwelling units by type over time with state and local data.

Analysis of Existing Stock

The majority of the city's housing stock is in good to excellent condition. This is in part the result of the historical development pattern of Warwick. While the city contains housing that dates back to the colonial period, the majority of its housing stock dates from the post World War II suburban expansion that dramatically changed the face of Warwick. Prior to the end of the war, the city was characterized by a largely rural development pattern of farms and coastal summer colonies. Up to that point the most densely populated areas of the city were located along the Pawtuxet River (the mill villages) and in the

waterfront neighborhoods of Pawtuxet, Conimicut, Oakland Beach, and Apponaug. Today these neighborhoods contain Warwick's oldest stock on small 5,000 to 7,000 square foot lots.

Citywide historical data available from building permit data on single family, multi-family and total dwelling units from 1960 to 1990 was coupled with census tract data from the U.S. Bureau of Census available for decennial years in order to provide base numbers. Data was also collected on the number and location of new streets (by census tract) between 1980 and 1990 from the Warwick Department of Public Works. The number of new lots created by new streets, however, represents less than half of the total number of new single family building permits issued.

A time series analysis comparing single-family and multi-family housing to the total number of dwelling units created by permit from 1960 to 1989 was used to profile the City's housing stock. Demolition was inferred by the difference between the number of building permits and the total dwelling units as per 1970 and 1980 census data.

Additional information on Warwick's housing market (location and physical description of units for sale) was obtained by using data from the Statewide Multiple Listing Service (MLS). The MLS data sources for this study included the 1989 Annual Summary of Sales and the biweekly listing of November 30, 1989 to December 13, 1989. The data collected from Statewide MLS was used by URI CPAD as the source for two data bases. The first database included information from the 1989 Annual Survey of Sales. The data included information that pertained to the location (plat, lot, neighborhood) physical description (type, age, number of rooms and bedrooms) and market characteristics (asking and selling price, time on market). The second database was derived from information obtained from the Biweekly Listings. It also included information on location and physical characteristics. Because of the nature of the data, market information was limited to asking price. An additional field was added to each database locating the property by districts established for the basis of this study.

Information contained in both databases was analyzed by using a computer based statistical analysis program (PC-SAS version 6.03). The data was analyzed on three different levels:

analysis of all listings to determine characteristics at the City level, analysis of listings within each district to compare sub-markets within the City, and analysis of the listings as to building type. Specific findings were to include, but not be limited to, averages and medians for each field of the database at each level of analysis.

Data was also collected from the RI Department of Administration Technical Paper #134 - "Assisted Housing" (1988), which inventories all state and federal assisted housing in Rhode Island by location, type, and number of units.

Forecasting Future Housing Stock

Prime rates charged by banks for the period 1960-1989 were obtained from the Statistical Abstract of the United States: Money Market, Interest, and Mortgage Rates (1989). A univariate linear regression analysis was performed by URI CPAD to determine the correlation between the prime interest rate and annual production levels for the reference time period. Forecasts of future housing stock were derived from a univariate linear regression model of prime interest rate in relation to the annual production level. The SPSS-X computer program was used to perform the calculations. Lastly, a constant factor for buildable land was

used to further modify the projections. Total dwelling unit permits (TDU), multi-family unit permits (MFU) and single-family unit permits (SFU) were the three independent variables. Prime interest rate (PIR) was introduced as an independent variable. Three univariate linear regressions were run between TDU vs. PIR, MFU vs. PIR and SFU vs. PIR respectively.

Buildout Analysis

Warwick Tax Assessor's Plat maps and Rhode Island Geographic Information Systems constraint maps were used to calculate the total acreage and number of buildable lots by zone designation from existing underdeveloped lots. A minimum size allotment of two acres was used for lots that were zoned A-15 and less, and a minimum of three acres was used for lots that were zoned greater than A-15, under the assumption that these size categories would limit the scope of the analysis to lots that had the greatest or most realistic potential for further subdivision. Because this was a zoning buildout, all lots zoned residential were considered, including schools and golf courses. This information was used to create an underdeveloped lot database for later retrieval and analysis. The raw data is parcel specific, meaning that it includes basic information about the parcel and where it is located, which can be

useful in determining where future developmental pressure might occur. A similar process was applied to the vacant residential lot information provided by the City Tax Assessor's office, to create a second vacant lot database. This data base included only those lots greater than 7,000 square feet, which again were analyzed in terms of environmental constraints and zoning requirements, to determine the buildable acreage. This would then produce the number of buildable lots. The combination of these two databases provided the number and the acreage of the potentially buildable lots by zone in the City of Warwick. The Buildout supplement utilizes the eight-district categorization of the remainder of the Plan. (See the Buildout Analysis supplement to the Land Use Plan for a detailed description of the methods.)

Housing Units

According to the 1980 U.S. Census, there were 32,450 housing units in Warwick in 1980, an increase of 23.8% from the 26,212 housing units that existed in the City in 1970. Housing units in Warwick at the time of the Census represented 8.8% of the total number of housing units in the State.

In 1980, 1,102 of the City's units were vacant,

producing a vacancy rate of 3.4%. Single family homes consisted of 75% of the total housing stock, and the remaining 25% was designated multi-family. There were 433 condominiums in the City in 1980. In 1980, 75% of the occupied housing units were owner occupied. The median value of owner occupied housing, excluding condominiums was \$40,700. Twenty-five percent (7,726) of the occupied units were renter-occupied and the median rent in the city, excluding condominiums, was \$228.

Housing Stock Analysis

Warwick has shown consistent growth in its share in the regional housing market, 1% per decade, as compared to a decrease in Pawtucket and Providence (-3.65%), and a slight increase in Cranston (0.25%). From the time series analysis of new residential structures performed by URI CPAD, it is apparent that multi-family dwelling units represent the greatest increase in number of new dwelling units in Warwick. However, single family houses still comprise the greatest proportion of the total number of dwelling units. Between 1980 and 1989, 1,528 new single family building permits were issued; of these, 660 were built on lots created by subdivision of land. The balance were built on pre-existing, nonconforming lots or as frontage lots on existing

streets. Since these lots can be developed as-of-right, this "infilling" represents a wild card in attempting to determine future growth areas.

Figures compiled from the Annual State Report on Local Government Finances and Tax Equalization show that since 1986, single family sales have accounted for on average 85% of all sales in the City of Warwick. Further analysis of housing stock based on sales data revealed that the housing stock in the City is fairly homogeneous. From Table 3.1, it would appear that the typical house in Warwick is 30 years old and has six rooms (three of which are bedrooms).

There is very little difference in home size within study districts in the City, with the exception of District's 11 and 13. District 11 showed only five home sales for the study period which could have an affect on the accuracy of the data. District 13 reflects the construction of larger homes in the Cowesett, Love Lane, and Heritage Park areas of the City.

While median age of stock within the City is 30 years, 20% of the homes sold in the City were ten years old or less. As would be expected, districts in the northern and eastern portions of the City have an older housing stock while newer stock lies in the western and southern portions of

Warwick. The age of stock in District 15 (Greenwood) is due to the presence of sales at (Potowomut) may reflect its development as a Wethersfield Commons, a large condominium summer colony. The low age of stock in District 7 development.

Table 17
MLS Sales Data Summary
Housing Stock

District	Median Age	Median Rooms	Average Rooms	Median Bedrooms	Average Bedrooms
1	38	6	5.9	3	2.9
2	39	6	5.8	3	2.6
3	11	6	6.6	3	3.4
4	35	5	5.3	3	2.6
5	30	6	6.0	3	2.8
6	19	5	6.0	3	3.0
7	10	5	5.9	2	2.7
8	29	6	5.5	3	2.7
9	28	5	5.4	3	2.6
10	35	6	5.9	3	2.7
11	50	10	9.0	4	3.6
12	33	6	5.8	3	2.8
13	21	8	7.3	3	3.2
14	14	6	5.8	3	2.5
<u>15</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5.9</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2.8</u>
Citywide	30	6	5.9	3	2.8

Source: A Study of Housing for Warwick, RI (URI CPAD, 1990)

Housing units with moderate to severe physical problems represented less than two (2) percent of total housing stock. This reflects the fact that

Warwick has both a high percentage of homeownership and of housing built since World War II. Post-war housing constitutes over 77

percent of all housing units in Warwick.

Table 18
Housing Units in Warwick by Type, Condition and Cost - 1991

Housing Units	35,141
Vacant for sale	219
Vacant, held for occasional use (1980)	68
Vacant, held for occasional use (1990)	351
1990 Renter occupied	8,556
1990 Owner occupied	24,881
Vacant, 1980 Census	1,102
Vacant, 1990 Census	1,704
Rental vacancy rate (1990)	6.8%
Units built before 1940	7,944
Units built after 1979	3,068
Severe physical problems	123
Moderate physical problems	440
Lacking central heating	1,666
Lacking full bath	224
More than 1.01 persons per room	355
Median rooms	5.3
Median single family purchase price	\$111,739

Source: U.S. Census, 1990, American Housing Survey, 1988.

Differences in stock by type is difficult to assess due to limitations in the data. It was not possible for the students to analyze stock with more than two units due to lack of data. Analysis of remaining sales data did reveal that two family

homes had a median age of 55 years, single family homes had a median age of 33 years and condominiums had a median age of only 8 years. Condominiums and duplexes had fewer bedrooms on average than single family homes

(1.9 and 2.1 respectively).

Rental Profile

The Affordable Housing Preservation Act of 1988 recognizes that "Rhode Island has a serious shortage of decent, safe and sanitary rental housing units available at rents that are affordable to low and moderate families." The Report of the Strategic Planning Task Force Facing the Challenge (RIHMFC, 1988), contends that the production of multi-family housing units has been outpaced by the formation of households seeking rental housing and has created a shortage in the

availability of rental housing. The RIHMFC report estimates the shortfall of rental units at the State level to be 12,205.

The 1980 United States Census reports the number of rental units in Warwick at 7,726, an increase of 72% over the 1970 Census. The highest concentration of rental units are located in large apartment complexes with 10 to 49 units. A breakdown by type of the number of rental unit is provided by census data can be seen in Table 18.

Table 19
Rental Units - City of Warwick

Type of Unit	Number	% of Total
1 Detached	1810	23.4
1 Attached	104	1.3
2	1011	13.1
3 to 4	396	5.1
5 to 9	253	3.3
10 to 49	2739	35.5
50 or More	1408	18.2
Totals	7726	100.0

Source: U.S. Census on Housing, 1980.

Despite the assertion that multi-family housing has outpaced single family housing in Warwick since 1968, there is no clear indication that the number

of rental units in the City has increased significantly during the past decade. Information from the Building Department indicates that there

were 1834 permits issued in the City for multi-family housing between 1981 and 1988.

However, the vast majority of these permits were issued for condominiums, which can not be directly translated into rental housing units.

Table 3.4 indicates a potentially dramatic decrease in the growth of the rental supply in Warwick. If building permits issued for

condominiums are factored out of the multi-family data, only 150 units have been added to the City's rental stock since 1980. This figure is likely an underestimate of the rental stock as it does not include single family homes or condominiums that have been added to the rental stock.

Table 20
Multi-Family Unit Building Permits

Year	Units	# Non-condo Units	% of Total
1981	190	23	12.0 (Estimate)
1982	50	6	12.0 (Estimate)
1983	350	42	12.0 (Estimate)
1984	147	18	12.0 (Estimate)
1985	162	16	10.1
1986	186	26	14.0
1987	291	7	2.4
1988	447	12	2.7
Total	1834	150	

Source: City of Warwick Building Department.

There are two trends that the available data on non-condominium multi-family housing indicate. First, since 1985, there has not been a significant increase in large apartment complexes (over 10 units). In 1985, there was a permit issued for a

12-unit complex, and in 1988 there was a permit issued for a 10-unit complex. With the exception of these two cases, the remaining non-condominium multi-family permits have been granted for duplexes or small apartment buildings.

The second trend is a decrease of non-condominium multi-family units as a percent of total since 1986. This decrease occurred at the time of the 1986 tax reform, which removed many of the financial incentives that had fueled the multi-family housing market. While changing demographics and a dramatic increase in household formations indicate a need for an increase in the total number of rental units, it appears that the supply of new rental housing units is lagging behind. Three population groups with relatively low historical rates of home ownership have contributed to the increase in household formation in the City of Warwick, including: 1) single parent families, 2) households composed of unrelated individuals, and 3) individuals living alone.

The relationship of increased demand to the slowdown in supply has resulted in dangerously low vacancy rates for rental units. Estimates of the vacancy rate for rental property in the City range from 1% to 5%. Low vacancy rates, and the impact of the 1986 tax reforms, have contributed to a dramatic increase in rental costs.

The 1980 Census listed the median rent in Warwick at \$228, the highest median rent in the

State. A 1986 RIHMFC report documents a 76% increase in average rent from 1980 to 1986, resulting in an average contract rent in the City of \$469.

Subsidized housing in Warwick is predominantly focused on elderly units. There are approximately 2,022 units currently subsidized through federal assistance programs. The period 1970-79 saw the greatest increase in subsidized units with 851 units in multi-family dwellings came under a federal assistance program (reflecting 2.6% of the total number of multi-family units). Between 1980-88, subsidized units increased by 547 units. Of this, 36 units were low-income family dwellings established in multi-family dwellings. Subsidized units in multi-family dwellings represent 5.4% of the total units in Warwick as of 1989, and 24% of multi-family housing. The largest concentration of subsidized units is in the Sparrows Point area in District 14, with 475 units for elderly housing. Most of the low-income family units are located in scattered sites throughout Warwick. The total number of single family dwelling units under Section 8 is unknown.

Forecasting Future Housing Stock

The projections of single family, multi-family and total number of new dwelling units show the

greatest increase for multi-family dwelling units. Multi-family dwelling production does not appear to be correlated to fluctuations in the prime lending rate. The regression model used showed the greatest correlation between prime interest rate and single family dwelling production levels. An estimated 39,830 dwelling units will be in existence in the year 2000, with approximately 2,210 being new single family dwellings. These projections have not yet been modified for the availability of land.

Buildout Analysis

In addition to vacant standard lots, and undeveloped lots, development can occur on non-conforming, undersized lots that predate the existing Zoning Ordinance. To determine the extent to which each development scenario may affect Warwick, and the maximum development allowed under existing law, a build-out analysis was conducted. Detailed findings may be found in the Buildout Analysis supplement to the Land Use Plan.

Summary

By combining the results of the analyses, a profile of Warwick emerges. Historically, Warwick's housing stock has consisted of predominantly three-bedroom single family homes. A multi-family building surge in the 1980's resulted

in an abundance of two bedroom condominiums, whereas construction of rental units has lagged significantly. Public sector development of subsidized housing has also failed to meet the need for affordable family sized rental units either.

Compounding the affordability gap has been Warwick's increasing role as a regional housing center.

However, the outlook of housing supply is encouraging. Warwick has an estimated 9,486 existing building lots, more than enough to meet the projected addition of 2,935 new units by the year 2000 as projected by URI CPAD's univariate linear regression analysis (see "Forecasting Future Housing Stock"). How the City chooses to manage its growth will be determined by how well it addresses these areas of concern:

1. a possible shift in regional population to the City of Warwick due to the relative availability and affordability of land,
2. the tendency to develop pre-existing non-conforming lots,
3. the difficulties in predicting capital improvement needs,
4. growth potential in Districts 6, 13 and 14 and the projected need for services in those districts,
5. overall demand on City services due to development,
6. lack of affordable rental units, and

7. the need for an updated and organized information system.

CHAPTER 4

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains an inventory of critical concerns that emerged as a result of data analysis in the URI CPAD study. Broader issues that most significantly effect housing in the City of Warwick were defined based on these specific concerns. The method employed to identify these issues was a three-step process that is described below.

Methods

1. Issues identification - This involved the identification of critical concerns, and the range of issues which emerged from the URI CPAD analysis of the data.
2. Issues analysis - The purpose of this element was to select issues which have a direct impact on the creation and implementation of housing policy in the City of Warwick.
3. Recommendations - The selected issues were then matched with policy recommendations for use in the comprehensive planning process.

The City of Warwick has grown from a suburban community in the 1950's to a mature suburban city in the 1990's. Analysis indicates that as a result of the changing character of the community, Warwick is faced with issues that are more urban in nature than the City has experienced in the past. The factors that which have influenced the changing character of the community include:

- change in demographics,
- erosion of neighborhood identity,
- competition between residential and commercial development,
- demands on the City's infrastructure, and
- the effect of real estate market conditions on the City.

Underlying these broad areas of concern is a number of critical concerns that the City should address in the comprehensive planning and public policy process. If these issues remain unresolved, the City will have lost an opportunity to control future development. New developments should be designed to integrate growth with the scheduling of capital improvements and to maintain a level state of growth that is consistent with the

existing character of the community. Listed below are the issues identified as those most likely to have significant impact on availability, accessibility, and affordability of housing in Warwick. In addition a policy matrix including the issues, critical concerns and recommendations follows for easy summarization.

Issue No. 1: Affordable Housing

Demand for housing has been growing throughout the State as well as in Warwick. Present market conditions have suppressed production of new housing, particularly in the area of condominiums and multi-family units. Single family homes are still being built, although at a much lower pace than in past years. Therefore, it is true that traditional housing supply and production are not meeting demand. However, the overriding issue in Warwick today is that the City has perhaps the largest overall supply of affordable housing in proportion to its total housing stock than any other community in Rhode Island, except maybe for Providence. It is also true that the largest proportion of affordable housing is in the City's inventory of single-family owner occupied units.

The demand is also not being met by public housing initiatives. The largest component of low-income demand identified for Warwick by State Guide Plan Element 422 is small family households (53 percent of total demand). While this projected demand argues for a corresponding investment in family housing, the City's past emphasis on development of assisted units was

on creation of subsidized units for the elderly population.

There are specific segments of the population that are impacted more by the affordability gap than others. Specifically these include the elderly and single parent households, whose income are generally not sufficient to either maintain an owner occupied unit or a market rate rental unit. The mere production of new units would not necessarily solve the special needs of these groups. In the case of the elderly, problems tend to fall into two general areas. The first is that many elderly who now own or maintain single family units, and are financially or physically/mentally unable to remain in them are often forced to leave Warwick to find housing. To target this specific situation, the City can do more to allow such persons to remain in their homes as long as they are physically able. The range of options that the City may offer include: 1) tax relief, 2) the creation of accessory apartments within larger single family houses, and 3) provision of low-interest or no-cost loans or grants to maintain the physical integrity of the structures.

Tax relief is presently available to the elderly for owner occupied units. However, these relief programs are not sufficient to sustain needy elderly or those who require health care in their homes. The City can go beyond the minimum deductions if it so chooses.

Congregate housing and accessory apartments are two options that allow elderly people to share units with others, reducing the financial burden. Currently, both congregate housing and accessory apartments are allowed in the City's Zoning Ordinance only by special exception from the Zoning Board of Review. Congregate housing is defined as a situation where a group of persons (in this case elderly people) can live together in a single structure and maintain common housekeeping facilities such as kitchen, bathroom, and laundry. Accessory apartments are set aside specifically for rental and involve some level of privacy even though kitchen or laundry facilities may be shared. The City should encourage the use of congregate housing and accessory apartments to help alleviate the shortage in elderly housing.

The City also has diminishing opportunities for federally funded programs as continuing cutbacks in federal aid affect cities all nationwide. However, Warwick still has the Community

Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, which can be targeted to assisting the elderly and single parent households.

The promotion of decent rental housing and the protection of tenant's rights are high priorities for the City of Warwick. A major challenge facing not only Warwick but also all of Rhode Island is the loss of affordable housing units through prepayment of HUD mortgages.

The need for institutional policies and actions to protect renters and preserve the supply of subsidized and affordable housing units is clear. The strategies to pursue this goal are being investigated by the City's Taskforce on Affordable Housing. The Taskforce is comprised of representatives from city government, including the Community Development Office and the Departments of Human Services, Planning, Building and Zoning; representatives from private non-profit organizations that provide affordable housing and housing related services; and representatives from the fields of law, real estate development and banking.

Issue No. 2: Vacant Infill Lots

The URI CPAD housing study revealed that there over 9,000 vacant lots scattered throughout the

City. The majority of these lots are zoned residential and many (if not most) are undersized in terms of the current Zoning Ordinance. Most of these lots will probably not be developed. However, there are opportunities to selectively assign groupings of these vacant lots to develop small affordable single family homes. While these lots have been identified and compiled in the housing study, the City needs to have more information on the exact nature and size of these parcels. The City does not want to allow overcrowding by development of these small lots.

By selectively assigning groups of parcels that can be combined to create reasonably sized house lots, some of the gaps in housing affordability can be met.

Issue No. 3: Coordination of Housing Programs

The URI CPAD housing study also noted that there was a lack of a central focus for housing administration in the City. The City does have numerous agencies that deal with housing on an on-going basis. The Planning Department is charged with planning for housing programs and policies; the City's Housing Authority is charged with providing public housing for families and the elderly; various private agencies provide assistance in various ways; and the City's CDBG program provides a variety of housing assistance

programs. In addition, the Rhode Island mortgage housing and Finance Corporation (RIHMFC) provides an array of mortgage assistance for first time buyers and some rental assistance as well.

There is a need to have better coordination among the various agencies that administer delivery of housing programs. The Planning Department is ideally situated to be the central coordinating agency among the various local and state housing agencies. In order to effectuate a proper system, there are several requirements as follows:

- 1) Maintain a proper data inventory of housing units in the City particularly those that fall in the price range of affordable housing as defined by RIHMFC.
- 2) Maintain a common scale for record keeping on a computer data file arranged by Assessor's Plat and Lot.
- 3) Maintain a listing of all vacant parcels and their current condition, size, and zoning designation, and developable status. Certain judgments need to be made regarding the development potential, and the desired build-out of these vacant parcels in consideration of a balance

between overcrowding and the need to provide additional affordable housing.

With this information base the Planning Department can advise the Housing Authority as it seeks to establish new public housing units in the City. It can also advise RIHMFC on the target populations and the sites where affordable units may be purchased. Finally, the Planning Department can also influence land use decisions through the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Review in situations where it either wants to promote the creation of new affordable units or control the development in order to prevent overcrowding.

Issue No. 4: Neighborhood Identity

The growth of the City has resulted in tremendous changes in the character of the community (e.g. an eroded sense of City neighborhoods). As the City grew from a series of villages where neighborhood identity was very strong, and new residents entered Warwick. The growth of commercial and industrial development, particularly as Warwick became a regional shopping center, has further eroded neighborhood identities. Even in the delivery of services such as recreation and open space, the City tends to look upon itself as one large single unit where people drive from one point to

another. In order to maintain the quality of existing housing stock there needs to be a greater sense of the neighborhood cohesion, in which pride in a neighborhood would encourage people to maintain their properties without urging or funding from government agencies.

The City can do much to salvage its neighborhood identities. First, it must control the intrusion of commercial uses into residential areas. As residences are converted to commercial uses, the remaining residences are isolated and disconnected from their traditional base. Neighborhood associations tend to be stronger when they are defending the integrity of their neighborhood. Second, the City should encourage stronger neighborhood associations by involving them more in the planning process and land use decisions. The City should consider instituting a system whereby neighborhood associations are notified of Planning Board, Zoning Board of Review, and City Council meetings when major land use issues are being considered. An informal system currently exists, however, it needs to be formalized in order to become effective.

Goals for Housing:

The issues identified in the previous section were the basis for the following housing goals and subsequent recommendations.

Goal - *provide the ability for Warwick's elderly population to remain in their homes.*

Goal - *provide a range of housing opportunities for Warwick's growing senior population, especially those seniors whose financial resources limit their access to housing.*

Goal - *expand the supply of affordable rental housing for families, including those with special needs (single-parent households, physically/mentally-impaired households, etc.).*

Goal - *provide a coordinated public/private*

response to affordable housing issues.

Goal - *preserve residential neighborhoods and neighborhood identity*

Goal - *preserve Warwick's housing stock, especially housing at risk from demolition by neglect.*

Goal - *insure that in-fill development does not degrade the quality of life of Warwick's neighborhoods or the City's ability to provide needed public services.*

Recommendations			
Recommendations	Immediate (1 to 2 years)	Short term (3 to 5 years)	Long Term (6 to 10 years)
Promote affordable housing strategies that would include alternative housing types such as congregate housing and accessory apts.	X	X	
Provide assistance to the elderly so they may remain in their homes. Seek a low/no interest revolving loan program for home repairs.		X	
Provide assistance to the elderly so they may retain their homes. Support reverse mortgages and life estates		X	
Work with private organizations to develop affordable housing for people with special needs.	X	X	X
Develop a detailed inventory of substandard and tax title lots within the City and develop policies regarding future use.	X	X	
Discourage commercial encroachments into residential neighborhoods that threaten their viability.	X	X	X
Expand housing rehabilitation programs and market them aggressively.		X	X
Explore possibility of granting the Warwick Housing Authority a larger role in the production of housing units in conjunction with the private sector.		X	X
Mayor establish Affordable Housing Task Force to identify existing opportunities which may become the focus of initiatives to provide affordable housing.	X		
Implement the recommendations of the	X	X	

Recommendations	Immediate (1 to 2 years)	Short term (3 to 5 years)	Long Term (6 to 10 years)
Affordable Housing Task Force.			

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Congregate housing includes a group of unrelated elderly people who share living quarters and are basically self-sufficient. An accessory apartment is a living unit added to a single-family residence.
- ² See The City's Land Use Plan: 1986-1991 and the Historic Preservation Master Plan (1991) for a more detailed discussion of this period.
- ³ Statewide Historical Preservation Report: Warwick, Rhode Island (Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, 1981)
- ⁴ City of Warwick, RI Land Use Plan: 1986-1991 (Planning Department, 1987)
- ⁵ City of Warwick, RI Land Use Plan: 1986-1991 (Planning Department, 1987)
- ⁶ Robinson, Ray, 1984. Housing Economics and Public Policy. School of Social Sciences, University of Sussex.
- ⁷ RI Department of Administration, Division of Planning. Technical Paper Number 129 - "Housing and Residential Land Demand: Rhode Island 2010."
- ⁸ Facing the Challenge: Report of the Strategic Planning Task Force (RIHMFC, 1988).
- ⁹ City of Warwick Affordable Housing Study (Warwick Affordable Housing Board, October 1988)
- ¹⁰ RI Department of Administration, Division of Planning. Technical Paper Number 129 - "Housing and Residential Land Demand: Rhode Island 2010."
- ¹¹ Warwick Affordable Housing Study (Warwick Affordable Housing Board, 1988).
- ¹² Economic and Fiscal Trends in Warwick 1970-1985 (Warwick Planning Department, 1986).
- ¹³ Economic and Fiscal Trends 1970-1985 (Warwick Planning Department, 1986).